

# Being a Testimony to Satan about God's Goodness

by Zac Poonen

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*This sermon emphasizes the importance of being a witness not only to people but also to satanic powers, highlighting the mystery hidden in God that can only be revealed by Him. It discusses the need for a consistent Christian life, understanding God as a loving father, and avoiding self-condemnation and discouragement. The focus is on seeking Jesus in Scripture, relying on the Holy Spirit for guidance, and striving to please God with a joyful heart.*

**Duration:** 21:49

**Scripture:** Ephesians 3:8, Acts 1:8, 1 John 1:7, John 5:39, Revelation 4:1, Psalm 115:8, Matthew 5:48, James 1:17, Romans 8:15

**Topics:** "Witnessing", "Seeking God"

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## Description

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## Transcript

We have all known the importance of being a witness. As a Christian, Jesus said, you shall be witnesses unto me to the outermost parts of the earth. But there is another passage in Ephesians 3, which I'd like to point out to you.

Ephesians 3, Paul says that he was called in verse 8 to preach to the Gentiles and to bring to light, verse 9, a mystery which is hidden for ages in God. A mystery is a secret that can be understood only if God gives you a revelation. You can't understand it by study.

There are mathematics, physics you can understand by study. But a mystery of God, you can only understand if God gives revelation. And he doesn't always give it to clever people.

He gives it to humble people. Peter got revelation, which clever people in Israel didn't get. So a mystery which has been hidden in God.

And one part of that mystery is very interesting here in verse 10. Read verse 10 very carefully. The manifold, manifold means the many-sided, like a rainbow, the many-colored, many-colored wisdom of God, many aspects of God's wisdom, should be made known not to the outermost parts of the earth, not to people on earth, but to the evil rulers and authorities, to satanic powers.

Now many Christians have not thought of the importance of being a witness to Satan, to satanic powers. Acts 1a does be witnesses to the outermost parts of the earth, to people, believers. But Ephesians 3.10 is to be a witness to satanic powers.

What is the difference? Well, I would say one difference is people on earth don't see us all the time. If you want to be a witness to people in your office, it's only when you're in the office. Or if you want to be witness to others whom you meet, how much do we meet with people? Very little.

But to be a witness to Satan is something which is 24 hours. It speaks of a consistent life where the devil can always see me manifesting the life of Christ, at home, in difficult circumstances, when nobody's watching, when I'm all alone. Now all that doesn't apply to being a witness to the people on the earth.

You can be an absolute hypocrite for 50% of your life and be a very good witness to the world. So in one sense, Acts 1.8 is easier than Ephesians 3.10. But the mystery of God which has been hidden, it says from all ages, is this that God can now make us witnesses even to the satanic powers. In other words, there's a consistency in our life that we are always the same.

Now that doesn't happen overnight but it will never happen if we don't work towards it. God's purpose in sending in the Holy Spirit to dwell in us and fill us and lead us to pick up the cross in all situations is to make us witnesses to Satan. And that's not, I don't know whether you ever heard it in your life anybody preach on this.

I've never heard anybody preach about being a witness to Satan. In fact, a lot of things in the Bible I never hear other people talk about. It seems to me that many things in the New Testament are hidden.

It's right there. They read it. There are people who say I read the Bible 20 times and all that but there's something which is hidden and the Holy Spirit has opened your eyes to see it and when you see it, it changes the way you live, completely changes the way you live.

I mean, for example, if your aim in life is just to be a good witness when everybody's watching you and here's another guy who wants to be a witness to the devil 24 hours, you can be absolutely sure they're going to live on two different levels. One is very careful about his external witness, you know, very nice and Christ-like when he's in church or when he's with other people. The other person is just consistently Christ-like all the time and that's only possible if he decides I am going to take up my cross every day in every situation.

I'm going to die to self so that Christ can be glorified in my life. Now, I don't think that every Christian lives like that. So, one important what shall I say, character or qualification that we need to live like this is that we must have an understanding of God as a father.

It's very important, you know, it says the one of the greatest parts of God's wisdom is that he's a very loving father and now we all know that God is the father. It's one of the first things we learn as soon as you're born again. Somebody tells us now God is your father, pray our father who are in heaven but I found among Christians there are certain groups of people who say we must always rejoice, you know,

particularly those are in the charismatic movement or the pentecostals, they speak a lot about rejoicing and being happy and don't be gloomy and all that, it's true.

Then I feel a lot of people who are in churches like ours, we can tend to be a little more gloomy because we're so conscious of so much sin in our life that we get reminded off on Sundays and convicted off and we can tend to despise ourselves which is also wrong and so you have this other group of people who are living a very unreal life. I found that there's a lot of charismatics, there's a lot of sin in their life, they're always fighting at home and quarreling but they're so happy. It's a false happiness that God's certainly not happy with them but they are, it's a superficial feeling that God's always happy with me.

I'm in Christ, Christ is my righteousness, I have no righteousness of my own, I don't even imagine I have one, Christ is my righteousness so God is perpetually happy with me. If that was all there was in the gospel, we don't need so many pages of the New Testament. Here I just told you, listen, you receive Christ and Christ is your righteousness, forget it, just rejoice that you're accepted in Christ but there's a lot more than that and then on the other hand, I feel which is more likely among our churches where we speak about judging ourselves and taking up the cross that we can get the feeling that God is always a bit angry with me and I can't imagine God smiling at me, he's always a bit upset with me because there's something wrong in my life and I'm aware of it and that's not good.

Imagine if you, your earthly father, if you felt he was always a bit angry with you all the time because you're not perfect. I know that can be possible because it was like that with me and I know it hindered my spiritual growth, this feeling that God's always a little disturbed that something's wrong with me. Well, God knows that I'm not like Christ, I will never be fully like Christ till he comes back.

I will not be like Jesus Christ a hundred percent until he comes back and if God is going to be disturbed with me because I'm not like Christ, then he is perpetually upset with me but that's wrong. That's not the father that Jesus taught us about. It's the father who loves us intensely and recognizes that there is a growth in our life just like a baby is not perfect, a child in the kindergarten is not perfect but a child in the kindergarten can get a hundred percent and God doesn't expect that child in kindergarten to know algebra and trigonometry and physics and all no but he still gets a hundred percent.

So, we must never, we must get rid of this. I know it took time for me to get rid of it and even now it sort of comes back and then now and then like a temptation. The feeling that I look up to heaven and I see a father who's got a bit of a frown on his face.

That's wrong. Now, I'm not asking you to go to the other extreme where you become careless and say well God's always smiling at me no matter how long you live. There's a balance between the two.

A loving father who if he corrects us, it is never never in anger. It's never never because he's upset with us. It's because he wants to help us to do it better and say come on I can help you to do that a little better.

He's not angry. He's going to show us a better way to do things. It's always, I like that phrase in Revelation 4 and verse 1 which I often think of where the Lord told the apostle John in Revelation, come up here.

Let me show you something from here and the call of God is always come up a little higher. It's a call to perfection but he's not asking you to jump from kindergarten to standard 10 or grade 10. He's asking you to go from kindergarten to grade one and there are a lot of people around you who are in grade 6 and grade 10 and who are in college and all that.

Forget about it. Okay, they've been along the way for many years and they know God better and all that but God is happy with us where we are if we keep our conscience clear at our own level and the most important thing what does it mean to walk in the light? In 1 John 1 it says to have fellowship with God we must walk in the light. 1 John 1 7. If we walk in the light as God is in the light we have fellowship with God with him and the way we understand that is according to the light we have at present not according to the light somebody else has.

Think back to the example of a school. Not the light that some child in grade 10 has but the light I have maybe in grade one. That's all I need to walk in and with absolute ignorance of the higher levels of school you can get a hundred percent in grade one.

So God's desire he's never wants to look on us with a frown. The look of God upon us is always an encouraging look and get rid of the satanic idea that God is always looking at you a bit angry and we can think we are spiritual. If I look up and say God's looking at me with a frown that means I'm a spiritual person.

No you're not. It will hinder your relationship even with other people in your home. It'll hinder the way you behave with your children or with your marriage partner.

If you feel that God is looking at you with a frown you look at other people around you with a frown as well because you'll be like the God you worship. You know there's a verse in the Psalms which says those who worship idols become like them and I've seen that in relation to God. You become like the God you worship and if you look at a God who's always looking at you with a frown whether you know it or not you'll have an inner frown at other people all the time because they're not perfect.

Because you feel God looks at you as imperfect and he's always looking at you the frown because you're imperfect and you'll be looking at everybody around you with a bit of a frown because they're imperfect. But think if you could recognize the truth which is God knows there's imperfection in all of us but he still loves us. And his look is always a look of encouragement saying don't get discouraged you can do that better and I'll help you to do it better.

Think if you can always look at a God who says yeah that was wrong God says but you can do it better and I'll help you to do it better. Don't get discouraged. You remember some time ago I spoke about these two no entry roads.

No condemnation and no discouragement. Discouragement is a no entry road for the Christian. Self-condemnation is another no entry road for a Christian.

I must always keep that before us. Condemning oneself no entry. Getting discouraged no entry.

If I made a mess of my life okay go to my father and tell him Lord sorry slipped up. It doesn't mean I take sin lightly. I'm going to be more careful in those areas where I slipped up but God is not going to look at me with a frown.

And I'll tell you this if we learn to see more clearly the father that Jesus revealed to us it'll be very much easier to live what I call a consistent Christian life where it doesn't make the slightest difference in which surrounding we are. Whether we have lots of people watching us in some situation or nobody watching us. Whether we are in the office where we're very careful about our testimony or in church particularly we are very careful about testimony or whether we are at home where we know everybody will forgive us and we

are relaxed.

But it will make no difference in the way our desire to please our heavenly father and then we shall be a witness to Satan all the time because Satan sees us consistent. Wherever we are we want to live before the face of God consistently. And as we live before him the Lord will show us it's not in keeping certain commandments that we please him.

Let me show you a verse which has really challenged me of late John's gospel chapter 5. There's a lot more to this but I'll just mention it briefly here. John 5 39. Jesus is talking to the pharisees.

You search the scriptures. Apply that to yourself. You search the scriptures because you think that you have eternal life in them.

But they speak about me Jesus says and you don't come to me that you have life. You go to those scriptures and you think you can get life by trying to keep some commandment there according to the letter but you don't come to me. So what I learned from that verse is you search the scriptures and these scriptures Jesus says speak about me.

So what I learned from that verse is when I read the bible my primary goal must be to see Jesus not to find a commandment that I somehow keep and try to please God or find something where I feel God must be frowning at me because I didn't do that. No the scriptures Jesus says speak about me so come to me. So when I put verse 39 and 40 together I see it like this that when I read the scriptures I must see Jesus there and I must go to him.

So every time you read the bible ask the holy spirit to show you Jesus Christ. That's been how it has been with me for quite some time now number of years has changed my whole bible reading way and changed my life and I no longer have the goal of reading so many verses a day. That's good.

I used to there are two ways I think there are two patterns we can have in reading the bible. One is to read large sections so that we cover the bible say in a year or something like that but along with that I have another time of just brief meditation which we can just think of two or three verses and you can think about them without even having the bible open before you read and read about it and sometime during the day you think about it. That's how I used to study my bible in the beginning large sections that's what I still do even now large sections read through and then a small portion sometimes just one verse to meditate on and apply to my life and in all of them to see that the scriptures speak about Jesus Lord what do I see about you here and the scriptures are meant to bring me to him not to find a commandment that makes me feel oh I didn't keep that and God must be angry with me because I got a little upset today God's angry with me no he isn't he's he wants to forgive you he wants to make you a better person he always wants to make you a better person just think of your I look at it like this and maybe I'll close with this if you have a child a little boy or little girl who is desperate to please you really longing to please you and always trying to find out what will please my dad what will please my mom and you know that this child of mine is unusual he's always wanting to do what pleases me and he slips up somewhere and he looks so miserable how will you look towards him are you happy to see him miserable he's probably the best child in your home because he's so eager to please you think of yourself like that if you're a father or mother how will you look at a child like that that my brother sister is the way God's looking at you and he doesn't find any delight in seeing you gloomy and miserable because you slipped up I believe that most of you are really seeking to please the Lord and the Lord is delighted so let's rejoice in that and say Lord give me the power of the Holy Spirit to not to take sin lightly I don't believe we those who sit here regularly and who are

committed to this church will take sin lightly I don't believe that I believe that chances are more of our thinking than God is frowning at us now and then let's get rid of that and say Lord I want to be a testimony to the devil that I have a father in heaven I'm not an orphan Jesus said I don't leave the orphans I'm not going to walk around on earth as if I'm an orphan I have a father who cares for me who will correct me but he'll never forsake me he will never sort of give up on me and saying you're a hopeless case that's impossible amen

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